

# Washington Friday Report

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## INSIDE THIS WEEK

- 1 Heroin, Budget, Policing, Methane, DRIVE, Transit
- 2 LWCF, WH Initiatives, FirstNet, Grants, Wheeler
- 2 Worker Voice, Multifamily Emergency Toolkit

*Washington's Congressional and Presidential vacation continued this week, but, nevertheless, lots of news of interest to you - here's the highlights!*

### Fighting the Heroin Epidemic

On Monday, Director of the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) **Michael Botticelli** announced \$13.4 million in funding for High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas (HIDTA). Of that, \$5 million will be directed to a broad range of efforts that will reduce the trafficking, distribution, and use of heroin. A new Heroin Response Strategy, funded with \$2.5 million, will be used to fight opioid abuse in five HIDTA regions, including Appalachia, which contains 26 counties in Kentucky. Senate Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell** appreciated the additional federal assistance to combat the heroin crisis in his state particularly in the more rural areas. The five HDTAs will utilize the funding to target the emergence and resurgence of heroin by sharing intelligence, analyzing trends, providing law enforcement training, and strengthening partnerships between public health and public safety. For more, click on [ONDCP Announcement](#) or [Sen. McConnell Statement](#).

### Senate Democrats Call for Immediate Budget Talks

On Tuesday, all 46 members of the Senate Democratic Caucus, including two independents, sent a joint letter to Majority Leader **Mitch McConnell**, urging him to immediately schedule the first round of bipartisan budget negotiations, before Labor Day, to prevent what they call a "totally predictable and completely preventable crisis" in the fall over funding the federal government for FY16. Senate Democrats and the White House have stated that they will block any FY16 appropriations bills that adhere to the current spending caps under reduced sequester-levels. For more, click on [Senate Democrats' Letter](#).

### President Obama Speaks on Community Policing

In a recent weekly address to the nation, **President Obama** talked about the work the Administration is doing to enhance trust between communities and law enforcement in the year since the death of Michael Brown. The President highlighted the final



report of the Task Force on 21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing, released in May, which sets out concrete proposals to build trust and enhance public safety. He also talked about broader efforts to fundamentally reform the criminal justice system and make new investments in education and career pathways. For more, click on [Community Policing Address](#).

### EPA Proposes New Standards on Methane Emissions

On Tuesday, EPA proposed new standards that would reduce emissions of a particularly potent greenhouse gas, methane, by the oil and natural gas industry, in order to mitigate the negative consequences of climate change. The proposed standards for new and modified sources are expected to reduce methane emissions from the oil and gas sector by 40 to 45 percent from 2012 levels by 2025. They are also expected to reduce 170,000 to 180,000 tons of ozone-forming volatile organic compounds (VOCs) in 2025, along with 1,900 to 2,500 tons of other air toxics. For more, click on [EPA Methane Reduction Proposal](#).

### Transportation Alternatives and the DRIVE Act

A new report from the Rails to Trails Conservancy analyzes states' use of the Transportation Alternatives Program (TAP), formerly known as Transportation Enhancements, from FY1992 to FY2014. Over the past 23 years, 67 percent of TE and TAP funding went toward walking and biking, but in the past two years, 97 percent of TAP went to these projects. Under the current TAP program, 50% of TAP funds are controlled by states while the other 50% is allocated directly to local MPOs. Under the Senate's proposed *DRIVE Act*, 100% would go directly to MPOs, and overall funding would be increased to \$850 million, up from the current level of \$836 million in FY15. Current funding under *MAP-21* expires at the end of October. For more, click on [Transportation Alternatives Report](#) or our [Special Report – Forward on Transportation: The Drive Act and Beyond](#).

### Public Transportation Safety Program

FTA announced a proposed rule to establish a *Public Transportation Safety Program* under FTA's new safety oversight authority established by *MAP-21*. The proposed rule would create an overall framework for FTA to monitor, oversee, and enforce safety in the public transit industry, and is based on the principles and practices of Safety Management Systems (SMS). It would implement FTA's authority to



conduct inspections, audits, and examinations; testing of equipment, facilities, rolling stock, and the operations of public transit systems; and for FTA to take appropriate enforcement actions,

including directing the use or withholding of Federal funds and issuing directives and advisories. SMS would be established as the foundation for FTA's safety program, which focuses on organization-wide safety policy and accountability, proactive hazard identification, and risk-based decision-making.

The proposed rule also defines the contents of a National Public Transportation Safety Plan (National Safety Plan), which FTA expects to publish in a separate Federal Register notice for public review and comment in the next several months. The National Plan will include safety performance criteria for all modes of public transportation, minimum safety performance standards for transit vehicles used in revenue operations, the definition of "state of good repair," a Safety Certification Training Program, and other content determined by FTA. Public comments on the proposed rule must be received by **October 13**. For more, click on [FTA Press Release](#), [Proposed Rule](#), or [Statement by FTA Acting Administrator Therese McMillan](#).

#### LWCF State and Local Assistance Grants

The Interior Department announced \$42 million in funding to states to promote outdoor recreation and conservation through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) State and Local Assistance Grant program (State-side). States match the funding by at least 50 percent and determine how to leverage it to support the priorities of local communities, such as building parks and ballfields, providing hunters and anglers access to rivers or public lands, and conserving natural landscapes for public use and enjoyment. Local governments should work with their states to apply directly for funding for local projects. Interior Secretary **Sally Jewell** called on Congress to reauthorize and fully fund the LWCF, which is set to expire on September 30. For more, click on [LWCF Funding Announcement](#) or [State-by-State Breakdown](#).

#### White House Initiatives at the Local Level

On Tuesday, the White House released a report titled, "*Taking Action on the Ground: Progress on the President's Priorities in State and Local Communities*," highlighting how the President's initiatives are being implemented at the state and local level. Issues highlighted in the report include: the minimum wage, paid leave, early childhood education, climate change, community college, My Brother's Keeper, veteran homelessness, Let's Move!, ConnectED, ConnectHome, TechHire, and Startup in a Day. For more, click on [Report on State and Local Actions](#).

#### Members Serving on FirstNet Board Include Mayor

On Wednesday, Commerce Secretary **Penny Pritzker** named four experts to serve three-year terms on the First Responder Network Authority (FirstNet) Board, including Houston Mayor

**Annis Parker**, who was appointed to another term. FirstNet is mandated by Congress to develop, build, and operate the first nationwide public safety broadband network. There are 15 Board members in total, who play a critical role in deciding how the new network will best serve the needs of local governments, states, regions, tribes, and federal government personnel. For more, click on [FirstNet Board Members Announced](#).

#### Grants This Week



This week, we sent many of you a grant notice on the [FY16 Community-based Marine Debris Removal Program](#). Please contact

*Jen Covino with any questions about grants.*

#### Chairman Wheeler on Public Safety Technology

On Wednesday, FCC Chairman **Tom Wheeler** delivered remarks at the 81<sup>st</sup> annual conference of the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) to discuss great technological changes taking place in the public safety industry. He discussed FCC's text-to-911 rules, wireless 911 location accuracy rules, and Next Generation 911. For more, click on [Chairman Wheeler's Remarks](#).

#### White House Summit on Worker Voice

On October 7, the White House is convening a *Summit on Worker Voice*, bringing together workers, employers, unions, organizers, and other advocates and experts to highlight the value of collective bargaining, examine challenges facing workers trying to organize in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, bring attention to new, innovative ways that workers are coming together to have a voice in their workplaces, and engage employers who are collaborating with their workers to create meaningful partnerships that are good for both workers and businesses.

Labor Secretary **Tom Perez** is calling on workers to share their individual stories about how they, or someone they know, have stepped up in their workplace to receive better treatment from their employers. For more, click on [Summit on Worker Voice](#).

#### Emergency Preparedness Toolkit for Multifamily Housing

HUD released a national emergency preparedness staffing toolkit for multifamily housing, to help affordable housing organizations build emergency plans that promote business continuity, resident engagement, and building protection in response to a natural disaster. The toolkit is the first of its kind dedicated to multifamily housing emergency planning in the U.S. Several live online events will be held in September and October on the new disaster staffing toolkit. For more, click on [Ready to Respond: Disaster Staffing Toolkit](#).

*Please contact Len Simon, Brandon Key, Jen Covino, or Stephanie McIntosh with any questions.*